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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000062

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FOR EUR/SCE, EUR/PPD AND EUR/RPM  
OSD FOR WINTERNITZ, NSC FOR BRAUN

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TAGS: PREL PGOV MARR NATO UNSC HR

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S INTRODUCTORY CALL WITH NEW FM GORDAN JANDROKOVIC

REF: STATE 7698

Classified By: Rick Holtzapple, POL/ECON, Reasons 1.4 B/D

¶1. SUMMARY: New FM Jandrovic told the Ambassador on January 25 that Croatia remains committed to close cooperation with the US, and would continue to strive to promote stability in its region. He confirmed Croatia's intention to recognize Kosovo's independence. He stressed the GoC's awareness that it must continue efforts to raise public awareness of and support for NATO membership, and also remained committed to delivering on the related bilateral objectives of amending Croatia's property restitution law and approving the supplemental Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

At the UNSC, Jandrovic said Croatia intended to follow the lead of the EU and the US. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (SBU) The Ambassador met on January 25 with new Croatian Foreign Minister Gordan Jandrovic for his first meeting with Jandrovic since he had been named as FM. The Ambassador opened the meeting by presenting Jandrovic with the Secretary's letter of congratulations (REFTEL). Jandrovic said he was especially pleased to receive the letter as he had already received press inquiries as to whether the Americans had congratulated him on his appointment, and now he had a good answer.

¶3. (C) Jandrovic continued by thanking the US for its support of Croatia, particularly in regards to Croatia's NATO aspirations, and in lobbying to transform the OSCE mission to a downsized office in 2008. Jandrovic said the GoC understood it still had obligations to continue reforms related to the OSCE presence, and would meet its commitments fully. Jandrovic added that the GoC would also pursue continuity in its foreign policy as well, including a particular focus on promoting stability in the region of southeastern Europe. He said one sign of the importance of this policy is that his first foreign visit as FM will be to Bosnia-Herzegovina. On Serbia and Kosovo, Croatia continued to follow developments in Belgrade and is "not too happy" with how things are going. He did observe, however, that there might be some benefit if the Radicals were in power when Kosovo gained independence, as it would then be harder to blame the moderate Serb parties. He reconfirmed the GoC's policy to follow the EU and US regarding recognition of Kosovo. He noted that Croatia hoped the EU would be able to present a united position on Kosovo recognition, but said that even if the EU is divided, Croatia would go with the EU majority.

¶4. (SBU) Jandrovic also said that the GoC remained aware of the remaining work that needed to be done for Croatia's NATO

invitation, particularly in building further public support for membership. The State Committee for NATO membership would meet on January 28 and he and Croatia's Ambassador to NATO Davor Bozinovic would discuss concrete plans to boost the GoC's outreach efforts. He noted that both the MFA and MoD had new spokesmen, and he was in the process of designating a new head for NATO affairs at the MFA, and said these changes were all part of the effort to improve the government's public messaging.

¶5. (SBU) Regarding some issues of bilateral interest, Jandrovic said the GoC remained "completely committed" to moving ahead with amendments to Croatia's property restitution law regarding property that was nationalized or expropriated during the Communist era. He also said he expected Croatia to be ready to sign the supplemental SOFA very soon, although he did not give a firm date.

¶6. (C) The Ambassador and the FM also discussed Croatia's current UNSC membership. Jandrovic responded immediately that Croatia "will always consult with the EU and the US" and intended to follow the EU and US lead. Jandrovic noted that this was another area where the GoC was also staffing up to improve its work. The MFA planned to appoint a special coordinator for UNSC issues, and would also be sending some additional diplomats to the UN Mission in NY. The Ambassador noted that when the new team was in place that we would seek to have officials from the IO bureau come to consult with them on the UNSC's pending agenda.

¶7. (SBU) COMMENT: The meeting was fairly short, as the FM was called away on short notice to a meeting with the PM, but Jandrovic's attitude and body language mirrored his comments about looking to cooperate closely with the US.

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While he is familiar with the main themes of Sanader's foreign policy from his previous position as chair of the parliament's Foreign Affairs Committee, Jandrovic is clearly still learning the details of his new brief, and at least some of his time and attention, as reflected in his comments, appears to be taken up with personnel decisions and assembling his new team within the MFA. END COMMENT.

BRADTKE